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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/697,041	10/31/2003	Hideaki Imura	SHO-0036	8363

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EXAMINER

KIM, ANDREW

ART UNIT PAPER NUMBER

3712

DATE MAILED: 08/28/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No. 10/697,041	Applicant(s) IMURA ET AL.	
	Examiner Andrew Kim	Art Unit 3712	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 08 April 2004.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-8 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-8 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 31 October 2003 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| 3) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date <u>11/03/04 4/08/04</u> . | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Claims 1, 3, 5-7 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Mizukai et al. (JP 2001-161950).

Claim 1. A gaming machine comprising:

- variable display means configured to variably display a plurality of symbol rows each having a symbol placement face formed in a curved surface on which a plurality of symbols are placed (pg. 5, paragraph 12, fig. 3, item M);
- image display means being provided in front of and opposed to the variable display means and configured to display the symbols through a flat symbol transmission face and to display an image concerning a game (pg. 5, paragraph 12, fig. 2 and 8, item 14);
- symbol illumination means configured to illuminate the symbols (Abstract); and
- image display assistance means being provided on a side of the variable display means to cover an area sandwiched between the symbol placement face and the

symbol transmission face on a face on the side of the variable display means, and configured to assist image display of the image display means (pg. 7, paragraph 21). The lamps and reflector plate are on the inside of the variable display means apparatus.

Claim 3. The gaming machine as claimed in claim 1, wherein the symbol illumination means comprises a rear illumination lamp configured to illuminate the symbols from behind the symbols, and wherein the image display assistance means reflects light emitted from the rear illumination lamp (fig. 8, item 52, pg. 7, paragraph 21).

Claim 5. The gaming machine as claimed in claim 1, wherein the image display assistance means is attached to a housing that houses the variable display means (fig. 8, pg. 7, paragraph 21).

Claim 6. The gaming machine as claimed in claim 1, wherein the image display assistance means comprises a white plate (pg. 7, paragraph 20).

Claim 7. The gaming machine as claimed in claim 1, wherein the image display assistance means comprises a mirror plate (pg. 7, paragraph 20). By definition, a mirror is a reflective surface and therefore the reflective plate disclosed in Mizukai reads on the mirror plate.

Claims 1, 4 and 8 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Ozaki et al. (US 2001/0031658).

Claims 1 and 8. A gaming machine comprising:

- a variable display means configured to variably display a plurality of symbol rows on which a plurality of symbols are placed (paragraph 48);
- image display means being provided in front of the variable display means and configured to display an image concerning a game (paragraphs 42-44); and
- side illumination means being provided on a side of the variable display means and configured to illuminate the symbols from a side of the symbols (paragraph 46). On the front side of the variable display, a fluorescent lamp is used to illuminate the surfaces of the reels/variable display.

Claim 4. The gaming machine as claimed in claim 1, wherein the symbol illumination means comprises a front illumination lamp configured to illuminate the symbols from a slanting direction of the front of the symbols, and wherein the image display assistance means reflects light emitted from the front illumination lamp (paragraph 46). On the front side of the variable display, a fluorescent lamp is used to illuminate the surfaces of the reels/variable display.

Claim 2 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Fuji et al. (JP 2001-143375) (machine translation).

Claim 2. A gaming machine comprising:

- variable display means configured to variably display a plurality of symbol rows on which a plurality of symbols are placed (pg. 5, paragraph 23);

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- image display means being provided in front of the variable display means and configured to display an image concerning a game (pg. 6, paragraph 32);
- symbol illumination means configured to illuminate the symbols (pg. 5, paragraph 27); and
- image display assistance means being provided on a side of the variable display means and configured to reflect light emitted from the symbol illumination means and to assist image display of the image display means (Abstract).

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Andrew Kim whose telephone number is 571-272-1691. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, John Hotaling can be reached on 571-272-4437. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

AK
8/21/2006



SCOTT JONES
PRIMARY EXAMINER